

The JOBS Program

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Program developers or their agents provided the Model Program information below.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

The JOBS Program is a group-based psychological educational intervention that has the dual goals of promoting reemployment and enhancing the coping capacities of unemployed workers and their families. The intervention offers a system for delivery and evaluation of a job-search skill enhancement workshop for unemployed job seekers 17 to 65 years of age. Through a series of interactive sessions, The JOBS Program helps participants—

- Identify effective job-search strategies
- Improve job-search skills
- Learn how to overcome setbacks in the job search process
- Increase self-esteem and confidence to implement one's job search skills
- Remain motivated to engage and persist in job-search activities until they become reemployed

PROGRAM BACKGROUND

Researchers at the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan have conducted research on the problems facing unemployed persons and their families since 1981. This research has produced detailed information, particularly on the economic hardship problems and family difficulties related to unemployment and job-seeking. After a series of studies documenting these problems and analyzing the needs of unemployed workers and their families, the Michigan Prevention Research Center (MPRC) developed and evaluated the JOBS Program to help unemployed workers effectively seek reemployment and cope with the multiple challenges and stresses of unemployment and job search.



RECOGNITION

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, United States. Department of Health and Human Services: Model Program

National Mental Health Association: Lela Roland Award

IOM CLASSIFICATION

SELECTIVE, INDICATED

The program was developed and evaluated with large samples of unemployed job seekers recruited from several unemployment offices of the State of Michigan that were located in the greater Detroit area. The demographic and occupational characteristics of the samples matched closely to those of the unemployed population of the United States. Later developmental studies included other populations in California, Maryland, and Finland.

This program is for short- and long-term job seekers and is particularly beneficial to those who are susceptible to or have already begun to experience the negative psychological and emotional effects of unemployment.

INTERVENTION TYPE

COMMUNITY-BASED

The program is delivered in employment offices, social service settings, community settings, and outplacement programs.

CONTENT FOCUS

PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAUMA, SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE, DOES NOT SPECIFICALLY ADDRESS ANY SUBSTANCES

PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAUMA

JOBS works to build inoculation against setbacks when seeking employment after a job loss and to decrease depressive symptoms and the likelihood of depressive episodes.

SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE

Helps job seekers increase and maintain self-esteem and confidence in implementing their job search skills

DOES NOT SPECIFICALLY ADDRESS ANY SUBSTANCES

While the program does not target substance abuse, reduced depression and depressive symptoms and increased self-esteem and self-confidence are likely to help prevent initiation or increased use of substances in reaction to job loss.

INTERVENTIONS BY DOMAINS

INDIVIDUAL

Instructor-facilitated, small- and large-group, interactive life/social skills training

KEY PROGRAM APPROACHES/COMPONENTS

INFORMATION SHARING, PEER LEADERSHIP, COUNSELING OR SUPPORT, SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Overall, the JOBS Program job-search intervention includes the essential components of job-search skill training using active learning methods, social modeling, inoculation against setbacks, and social support.

INFORMATION SHARING:

Workshop leaders engage participants in problem-solving processes that result in highlighting the principles of successful and unsuccessful job-search strategies, model and role-play effective techniques, and supervise role-playing activities by the participants. Participants learn new supportive behaviors via the modeling of workshop leaders who exhibit this behavior, then enact the behaviors and receive feedback from other participants and from workshop leaders.

PEER LEADERSHIP, COUNSELING, OR SUPPORT:

Participants' knowledge and skills are elicited and shared during small and large group discussions, role-playing exercises, and other activities. Workshop leaders model and role-play effective techniques, and encourage active participation.

Working in male/female pairs, JOBS workshop leaders use nondidactic active-learning methods to engage participants.

SKILL DEVELOPMENT:

Program participants engage in a group problem-solving process to help them discover the principles of effective job search, to cope with obstacles and setbacks in the job search process, and to cope with unemployment-related stress. Since inoculation against setbacks is fundamental to effective coping within the job-search process, part of the group's problem solving involves identifying or anticipating barriers to success and advance preparation of solutions to overcome them.

HOW IT WORKS

The JOBS program is delivered during 5 half-day sessions in employment offices, social service settings, community settings, and outplacement programs. Because social support is key to participants' ability to learn new skills and face job-market challenges, the program is delivered to groups of 12 to 20 job seekers. JOBS workshop leaders use nondidactic, active-learning methods to engage participants. Workshop leaders model and reinforce supportive behavior and effective job-search activities and skills and work to create a supportive learning environment through exercises that provide opportunities for participants to learn from and support each other.

Workshop leaders help participants discover principles of successful and unsuccessful job-search strategies; model and role-play effective job-search activities and techniques, such as job interview; and encourage active participation. Program participants are engaged in problem-solving processes to help them cope with unemployment-related stress, the job-search process, and the inevitable setbacks they will encounter. Recruitment begins in central organizational settings such as State employment offices or outplacement programs in corporate human resources departments.

JOBS Program workshop leaders (trainers) must be trained by master trainers from the Michigan Prevention Research Center. Workshop leaders should be carefully chosen by the master trainer or agency personnel to have demonstrated skills or experience with group facilitation and collaboration. They should be rigorously trained to be able to co-train together and to build trust among program participants. Training teams should consist of male/female pairs of co-trainers. The training is provided in a 7-week course that is offered at selected sites. A program manual, *JOBS: A Manual for Teaching People Successful Job Search Strategies*, outlines techniques for selecting and hiring workshop leaders and describes the training, design, and delivery of the Mock Job-Search Seminar and Trainer's Forum. One program manual is required for each workshop leader, as it also includes implementation and evaluation materials for the five-session, job-search intervention.

IMPLEMENTATION ESSENTIALS

A Participant Information Package, which includes a 3-ring binder with job search materials, instructions for role-playing, and other exercises, is required for each program participant. Three easels with flipcharts and markers are needed for each group session. Coffee and snacks for up to 20 participants should be available during each session break.

OUTCOMES

IMPROVEMENTS IN POSITIVE ATTITUDES/BEHAVIORS, OTHER TYPES OF OUTCOMES

The JOBS Program has been evaluated and replicated in randomized trials involving thousands of unemployed workers and their partners. The program returns unemployed workers to new jobs more quickly, produces reemployment in jobs that pay more, and reduces mental health problems associated with prolonged unemployment, particularly among those most vulnerable to mental health problems. In addition, the program has been shown to inoculate workers against the adverse effects of subsequent job-loss and job-loss setbacks because they gain an enhanced sense of mastery over job-search challenges.

IMPROVEMENTS IN POSITIVE ATTITUDES/BEHAVIORS

- Significant reduction in level of depressive symptoms and depressive episodes

OTHER TYPES OF OUTCOMES

- Higher proportion of study participants becoming reemployed and in higher-paying jobs than those in randomized control groups.
- Program's cost paid by Federal or State Government rapidly offset by increased tax revenues associated with higher-paying jobs obtained by program participants
- Populations at highest psychological risk for depression are helped most

- The program can be easily and economically implemented within existing unemployment offices
 - Program reduces need for and cost of mental health services for people experiencing mental health problems due to involuntary unemployment
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EVALUATION DESIGN

Program evaluation was conducted in two large-scale field experiments (JOBS I, 1984–1986 and JOBS II, 1991–1994) including randomized experimental and control groups. Initial analyses reported results for 6-month followups. Subsequent analyses included the results of 2-year, long-term followups, including the application of cost-benefit analysis.

DELIVERY SPECIFICATIONS

5–24 WEEKS

Amount of time required to deliver the program and obtain documented outcomes:

The intervention consists of recruiting unemployed job seekers to attend 5 intensive half-day workshops held over a 1- to 2-week period. Training workshop leaders requires a total of 7 weeks. The developer's evaluation studies documented beneficial reemployment and mental health outcomes as early as 2 months after participation in the program. These beneficial outcomes were also documented in 6-month, 24-month, and 32-month followups.

INTENDED SETTING

URBAN

JOBS has been implemented and studied mainly in urban locations. It has also been implemented in several countries outside the United States such as Finland, The Netherlands, Ireland, Sweden, and China. The locations where the program can be delivered include employment offices, social service settings, community settings, and outplacement programs.

FIDELITY

Components that must be included in order to achieve the same outcomes cited by the developer:

The success of the program relies upon the workshop leaders' mastery of active teaching, including successful facilitation of engaging group discussions and activities, modeling, and the provision of supportive positive reinforcements. Without these elements of leaders' mastery, the advantages of the program are lost or greatly diminished.

It is strongly suggested that program workshops be facilitated by a pair of male-female coleaders rather than by a single individual. All documented program outcomes were taken from program evaluations that included pairs of workshop leaders. A single leader would not have sufficient time to devote to supportive feedback and nurturing the self-confidence of the participants and would not have a trained partner to demonstrate various program modeling role-plays.

Optional components or strategies, and how they were determined to be optional:

Our experience in several implementation studies suggests that male-female cotrainers are desirable but not required. The skills of the trainers and their mastery of group facilitation are more important than their gender or their race.

BARRIERS AND PROBLEMS

Key barriers and problems associated with the use of this program and potential solutions:

Problem: The workshop leaders have difficulty delivering the intervention in a collaborative manner.

Solution: Be very deliberate when pairing individuals. Emphasize the importance of collaboration during training; if need be, interchange individuals to create partners who work together well.

Problem: The requirement for coleaders taxes or may increase the need for agency personnel. This may affect the agency's willingness to implement the JOBS Program.

Solution: Explain the advantages to having pairs of workshop leaders: the training load is divided and the workshop leaders support to each other, which results in higher workshop leader motivation and very low attrition. Higher leader motivation improves the program outcomes and reduces the cost of training new workshop leaders.

PERSONNEL

FULL-TIME/TEMPORARY, PAID

To facilitate coordination, the implementing agency will need to establish four semiautonomous teams: (1) the workshop leader group, led by a supervisor, referred to as the master trainer, (2) the evaluation and management team, led by a project director, (3) the office operation and administration team, led by the office manager, and (4) the participant recruitment team, led by a supervisor. It is critical that continuing supervisory support and problem-solving sessions be provided to maintain the high quality of program delivery.

Typical personnel problems encountered by users when implementing this program, and potential solutions:

Most of the problems are coordination problems among the teams as well as coordination and other issues within the teams. Schedule and hold regular project meetings between each team's leaders and supervisors. Similarly, regular feedback and coordination meetings of the members of each team are required for smooth operation of each team.

EDUCATION

HIGH SCHOOL, UNDERGRADUATE, GRADUATE, SPECIAL SKILLS

Experienced professional-level personnel with experience in the human services or education can learn to deliver the program. The special skills listed are more important than formal professional degrees.

Special Skills

Good program workshop leaders will have personal traits such as empathy, flexibility, and sensitivity. They should exhibit an ability to nurture and support others. In order to meet the commitments of the job, a candidate should be reliable, intelligent, able to meet deadlines, committed to the project, and have the stamina to handle the demands of the job including early mornings and late hours.

Communications are critical; workshop leaders should possess well-developed speaking skills, the ability to listen, talent in giving feedback, and skill at facilitating group process. Desired experience includes training adults, facilitating small groups, working with a cotrainer or team, and constructive conflict management. Training in social work and/or experience with group facilitation should be given high consideration in the selection process.

PERSONNEL TRAINING

TYPE: SEMINARS/WORKSHOPS, LOCATION: ONSITE (OF USER), OFFSITE (AT DEVELOPER'S OR TRAINER'S LOCATION), LENGTH: BASIC

JOBS Program workshop leaders must be trained by *master trainers* from the Michigan Prevention Research Center. Workshop leaders should be chosen carefully by the master trainer (training supervisor) and rigorously trained to deliver the program with fidelity and collaboratively as cotrainers. It is highly desirable that training teams consist of balanced male-female pairs. Most importantly, the pairs must be able to cofacilitate group processes that promote the learning and coping skills needed for job-search tasks. **Up to 30 people can participate in the 7-week training course to become workshop leaders, which is offered at selected sites and includes:**

- **Orientation Week**—three half-day sessions during which leader trainees are introduced to the program and developed into a team
- **Mock Job-Search Seminar**—a weeklong simulated job-search seminar during which experienced trainers assume the role of unemployed program participants
- **Trainer's Forum**—a weeklong series of miniworkshops where leader trainees lead the group in dealing with a variety of topics
- **Miniworkshop Series**—4 weeks of practice sessions that allow new workshop leaders to practice the intervention script and program delivery

COST (ESTIMATED IN U.S. DOLLARS)

\$10,000+

Cost considerations for implementing this program as recommended by the developer:

BUDGET COSTS:

The implementation budget should include program costs *and* research and evaluation costs. Below the developer provides the program costs. Research costs may vary greatly depending on the nature and scope of the research and the evaluation.

TRAINING COSTS:

Six-week training \$14,000 (approximate cost—2, trainers for up to 30 people, plus travel and expenses)

To train a group of up to 30 workshop leaders: 6 weeks of salary for advanced master trainer and 4 weeks of salary for assistant to master trainer plus transportation and lodging expenses to and at the site of training. The cost of the master trainer and the assistant for the entire training period is approximately \$14,000 (total for both). Cost of other expenses, i.e., transportation and lodging, depends on the location of the training site.

IMPLEMENTATION COSTS:

Group facilitated by one pair of coleaders for 5 half-day sessions 1 week of salary per trainer

(Each trainer usually is paid for 6–8 hours of work per half-day session to cover delivery and preparation time.)

MATERIALS:

For Workshop Leaders

1. *JOBS: A Manual for Teaching People Successful Job Search Strategies* (480 pages, available for \$28, or downloadable from MPRC Web site: www.isr.umich.edu/src/seh/mprc/)

(One program manual is required for each workshop leader.)

2. Three easels with flipcharts and markers for each group session.

3. Coffee, bagels, and cheese and cookies during the break of each session for up to 20 participants

For Program Participants

1. Participant Information Package (estimated cost: \$12)

(For each workshop participant; includes a three-ring binder with job search materials, instructions for role-playing, and other exercises. (Estimated up to 150 pages).)

INTENDED AGE GROUP

ADULTS (18–65)

The program is designed for persons 18 to 65 years of age who wish to gain paid employment.

INTENDED POPULATION

AFRICAN AMERICAN, HISPANIC/LATINO, WHITE

JOBS has been implemented and studied mainly in urban locations and included participants from diverse ethnic/racial, socioeconomic, educational, and occupational backgrounds and with varying degrees of past work experience. It has also been implemented in sites providing services to welfare-to-work clients.

The JOBS Program also has been studied and implemented in several countries outside the United States, including China, Finland, Ireland, The Netherlands, and Sweden.

GENDER

BOTH GENDERS

Males and females

REPLICATIONS

Two major randomized trials in the United States plus a randomized trial in Finland and demonstrations in seven cities in China, in several sites in California, Maryland, and Michigan.

ADAPTATIONS

Adaptations were done in language and program details in international sites, and adaptations were made in welfare-to-work populations served in Maryland.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Richard Price, Ph.D.

Dr. Richard H. Price is professor of psychology at the University of Michigan and research professor at the Institute for Social Research, where he is director of the Michigan Prevention Research Center. Professor Price, along with his colleagues Caplan, van Ryn, and Vinokur, received the Lela Rowland Award for Prevention Research from the National Mental Health Association for the development and research on the JOBS program. He also received the Distinguished Contribution Award from the Society for Research and Community Action of the American Psychological Association, and the Award for International Research from the Society for Prevention Research as well as the Prevention Science Award from the Society for Prevention Research. Dr. Price's research is focused on social organization, mental health, and the prevention of disorder and disability.

Amiram D. Vinokur, Ph.D.

Dr. Vinokur is a research professor at the Institute for Social Research of the University of Michigan. Dr. Vinokur's research focuses on determinants and consequences of psychosocial stressors and on the mediating effects of coping and emotional regulation processes. Dr. Vinokur is the associate director of the National Institutes of Health-funded MPRC and is engaged in designing, evaluating, and implementing preventive interventions to reduce depression and promote mental health and psychosocial functioning. The evaluations of these interventions are often embedded in randomized field experiments with longitudinal followup surveys and benefit-cost analyses. For his early work in the area of prevention, in 1990, Dr. Vinokur received the National Mental Health Association Lela Rowland Prevention Award. Since then, he has published many articles that report the results of these preventive interventions.

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